UNITED NATIONS

CERD

International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/304/Add.93
19 April 2000

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Fifty-sixth session

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Denmark

1. The Committee considered the fourteenth periodic report of Denmark (CERD/C/362/Add.1) at its 1377th and 1378th meetings on 8 and 9 March 2000 (CERD/C/SR.1377 and 1378) and at its 1397th meeting, on 23 March 2000, adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the detailed report presented by the Government of Denmark, which contains relevant information about changes and developments that have occurred since the consideration of the previous periodic report, including in Greenland. The Committee also welcomes the detailed answers to questions raised and concerns expressed during the consideration of the report. It expresses its appreciation for the frank dialogue with the delegation, which represented a very wide range of ministries, and for the comprehensive and thorough answers given orally to the wide range of questions asked by members.

B. Positive aspects

3. The fact that Denmark submits its periodic reports under the Convention within the established timetable is welcomed.

4. The Committee notes that the State party has enacted the Act on Integration of Aliens (1998), which entered into force on 1 January 1999. The new Act on the Board for Ethnic Equality, enacted in 1997, is welcomed.

5. The Committee notes with interest the establishment in 1999 of a new Committee of Ministers to prepare an inter-ministerial and comprehensive report on existing integration problems and a plan of action to improve the integration of aliens. In this regard, it noted that the report and action plan were launched in February 2000 and contain over 75 concrete initiatives and measures.

6. The Committee notes with satisfaction that, following the case of the Iraqi woman referred to during the oral presentation of the State party's report, the Danish Immigration Service decided to make slight adjustments to its practice by which it assigns refugees to municipalities in Denmark.

C. Concerns and recommendations

7. The Committee notes that the new Act on Integration of Aliens transfers the responsibility for integration from the central to the local authorities. The Committee recommends to the State party to monitor closely the implementation of the new Act with a view to ensuring that the geographical distribution of aliens within the State party is made according to the principle of equity and does not lead to violation of their rights recognized under the Convention.

8. In light of article 4 of the Convention, the Committee is concerned about activities of organizations which promote racial hatred and discrimination. It is especially concerned about the influence of Radio Oasen, owned by a neo-Nazi association, whose licence was renewed in 1997 by the Ministry of Culture and which receives financial support from the Government. The Committee recommends to the State party to declare illegal and prohibit any organization which promotes and incites racial discrimination and calls attention to its General Recommendation No. XV in this regard.

9. With regard to the right to housing, the Committee is concerned that decisions regarding quotas for newly arrived refugees and/or asylum-seekers can be arbitrary in their effects. The Committee recommends to the State party to adopt rules of procedure regarding the right to housing of refugees and/or asylum-seekers which are in line with the principles and provisions of the Convention.

10. The Committee notes that some individuals have been convicted for violating section 266 (b) of the Criminal Code and suggests that sanctions pronounced under the Criminal Code be commensurate with the nature of the related crime.

11. The Committee is concerned that equal attention be paid to the economic, social and cultural rights listed in article 5. It is particularly concerned by the level of unemployment among foreigners and the difficult access to employment of members of ethnic minorities. In particular, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the fact that, although the State

party is not obliged to provide work permits to foreign residents, it has to guarantee that foreigners who have obtained a work permit are not discriminated against in their access to employment.

12. The Committee recommends to the State party to take all effective measures to reduce unemployment among foreigners and facilitate the professional integration of all persons belonging to ethnic minorities in the public administration.

13. Though efforts in this sense have been initiated, the Committee notes that the Convention has not yet been translated into the Greenlandic language. It therefore recommends to the State party rapidly to facilitate this process and provide means for the dissemination of the Greenlandic version of the Convention.

14. The Committee reiterates its suggestion that even further action be taken to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are more widely disseminated, particularly among minority groups, government officials, employers and trade unions. The public should be better informed about the remedy available under article 14 of the Convention.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party's next periodic report, due on 8 January 2001, be an updating report and that it address all the points raised in the present observations.